

Embracing Change

By Tiffani Hill-Patterson



Change. It's the only constant in life. And it certainly keeps life interesting.

Two years after my marriage ended, I am facing yet another change: I will no longer be a homeowner. Soon Riley and I will be downsizing. While I'd like to be able to say I'm doing it because I want something smaller and with less upkeep, in reality, we'll be moving because I can't afford this three-bedroom, two-bath, two-income house any longer.

So we're looking at area apartments. Preferably with a pool. And a gym. And some greenspace. And a tornado safeplace. Riley would also like a playground and a hot tub. (Hot tub. Really? Not likely.) I'm more concerned with a safe neighborhood, a helpful maintenance crew, and mostly quiet neighbors.

I'm trying to think about the positives. No grass to mow! No floors to replace! No tree limbs to trim! No air conditioner to repair! Cheaper utility bills! A pool that I don't have to clean!

Packing up and moving will give me a chance to pare down and take a good look at the stuff I'm holding on to. I have an attic stuffed with Rubbermaid tubs filled with ephemera from past lives. Do I really need to keep a calendar from my first year of marriage? How about the cards from our wedding? Can I get rid of some of the plastic cups from various vacation restaurants? Why am I keeping that T-shirt from our last family trip to the beach? Or the dress I wore at our wedding reception? It's gorgeous, but I can't

picture myself ever wearing it again. Gone.

Packing up the house will also afford me the opportunity to cull Riley's room of Barbies with missing limbs, stuffed animals she doesn't even remember she has, and posters of tween celebs. Miley Cyrus is so 2010. And I've seen enough of her (literally and figuratively) to last a lifetime.

Of course, some negatives exist. It will be hard to give up the garage and go out to crank the truck in the middle of winter. And what will I do with Riley's swing set and trampoline she got as birthday presents? I will miss sitting out on my back patio, watching the sun set behind my neighbor's cow pasture. I will miss my fabulous neighbors who have been there to get Riley off the bus when I had to work late, who cooked meals for us when we had no power after last year's tornadoes. I'll even miss the doves that roost on my roof and wake me up early on Saturdays with their cooing.

Change comes whether I'm ready or not. Instead of fighting it, I want to embrace it. A fresh start in a different place will help me see the world in a new way. It won't be easy, but it's sure to be an adventure.

Tiffani Hill-Patterson writes about health, parenting, travel, and pop culture. Find her on the web at SoundCheckMama.com, VisitSouth.com, and TheMusicMamas.com. Contact her via patterson1723@mac.com or <http://tiffanihillpatterson.com>.